



How to Obtain Natural Heritage Data

What is Natural Heritage Data? The Division of Ecological and Water Resources maintains the Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS), a collection of databases that provides information on Minnesota's rare plants and animals, native plant communities, and other rare features. The NHIS is continually updated as new information becomes available, and the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) is a major source of this information. Public NHIS data layers (e.g., MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance, DNR Native Plant Communities, and MBS Railroad Rights-of-Way Prairies) can be downloaded at no cost from the MN Geospatial Commons at <https://gisdata.mn.gov/>. The NHIS Rare Features Data, however, is considered nonpublic data under the Minnesota Data Practices Act as it contains specific locations of state-listed species. This information is not available on the MN Geospatial Commons and must be requested per the instructions to the right. →

Why request this data?

This information is required as part of Minnesota's environmental review process. This data is often referred to as "ecologically sensitive resources" in environmental review documents.

This information is also useful for local government planning (e.g., comprehensive plans and watershed district plans).

Questions? Please contact Lisa Joyal, NHIS Data Distribution Coordinator, at 651-259-5109 or lisa.joyal@state.mn.us.

There are two ways to receive the NHIS Rare Features Data:

- 1) **Database Reports.** Submit a NHIS Data Request Form available at http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nhnrp/nhis_data_request.pdf. We will search the NHIS and provide you with a letter and/or database report regarding rare species and other rare features in the vicinity of the area of interest. *The fee* for this service is \$90 for the first hour plus \$50 for each additional hour.*
- 2) **Electronic Data.** The Rare Features Data (locations of state-listed species) can be obtained in electronic format (i.e., a GIS shapefile or geodatabase) by entering into a license agreement with the DNR. The purpose of the license is to establish a contractual relationship between the DNR and outside users of the data, and to provide a training context regarding the interpretation and appropriate use of the Rare Features Data. If you are interested in pursuing a license agreement, please submit the License Agreement Form available at http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nhnrp/license_agreement_form.pdf. *The fee* for this service is based on the following schedule:*

	Amount
2-year License Agreement Fee	\$200.00
Amendment Fee	\$50.00
Data Volume Fee (one of three options)	
Query by County	\$35/county
Query by Species	\$25/species
Query by Local Government Boundary	\$0.05/square mile
Exceptions:	
Fees will be waived for 1) government agencies, and 2) non-governmental organizations that are working in partnership with the DNR Division of Ecological and Water Resources to further the DNR's conservation goals on the ground.	